

Experiences of World Social Forum



Another World Is Possible





Foreword

the World Social Forum (WSF) IV was held in Bombay, India during 16-21 January 2004. The holding of WSF in India signifies the country's commitment to further the cause of the poor, marginalized and dispossessed of the world against the tides of capitalist led globalization. The WSF encouraged and catalyzed the interchange of ideas and experiences among the intellectuals, activists, humanists and civil society organizations on building another world free from the avarices of the neo- imperialism in the garb of globalization. It asserted the authoritative voice of the third world countries on better management of resources of the world, natural, financial and intellectual- to enlarge opportunities to individuals to access their rights and enjoy basic freedoms, which the neo-liberal and neo-imperialist policies are bereft of.

The World Social Forum is a global movement arising out of the belief that **"Another World is Possible."** It is an expression of the civil society world over against the undermining of democracy, human rights and exacerbated inequalities among and within nations, fuelled by capitalism, profiteering and domination of national economies by international economic and trade organizations and huge transnational companies.

We at PAIRVI, remain steadfast in our commitment to promote human rights and in the conviction that ***the rights for all must precede the riches for few***. We find ourselves diametrically opposed to what capitalist led globalization is causing to the world. Exclusion, pauperization, blatant and incessant violations of human rights of individuals and countries, we feel, are the grotesque consequences causing unimaginable suffering to the humankind. Our Campaigns on human rights and child rights have been punctuated with worthwhile forays in global campaigns on food and nutritional security and the WSF. We have been involved in the WSF processes at local, regional and global levels with the objective of providing solidarity to and making the defenseless abreast of the onslaught the market driven economy. Our participation in the WSF and Asian Regional Forum has helped us in build our own and capacity of the grassroots civil society organizations, on this global movement.

With the WSF being held in India, we responded enthusiastically to the opportunity of making more and more people aware of the values that WSF stands for. PAIRVI and IIWSF (India Initiative for WSF IV) planned and organized a series of events at and outside the WSF to win more adherents and lend more strength to the philosophy that ***"another world free of war, hunger and injustice and based on the respect for democracy, human rights, and equity is definitely possible."***

The present report is an account of Pairvi's engagement with the WSF. At this juncture, we take the opportunity to thank the individuals and organizations who lent us the credence, strength and invaluable help in making this possible. Our gratitude goes to Shri Sharad Joshi, CEO of CECOEDECON for being the source of energy and inspiration to undertake this daunting task. Pairvi is also extremely grateful to them who joined hands with us in the struggle for realization of human rights and promotion of social justice and democratic values. This is what WSF stands for. Thanking you

Narender Kumar
Director

“ this movement is one of the most significant in the history. To fight globalization you need to fight the way mahatma Gandhi fought with the strength of masses. He was the first to show the way to non-violence and this has also been the method of this movement. Peoples power is a new factor in international politics.”

(Shri K R Narayanan)

“ we want to tell the powerful forces of the world that we don't fight with tanks, with cluster bombs or atom bombs. We fight with our resolve, and with our pens. Victory will be ours because our resolve is based on principles.”

(Mr. Nelson Mandela)

“ for the first time in history, a single Empire with an arsenal of weapons that could obliterate the world in an afternoon has complete, unipolar, economic and military hegemony. It uses different weapons to break open different markets. There is not a country on God's earth that is not caught in the cross hairs of the American cruise missile and the IMF chequebook.”

(Ms. Arundhati Roy)

“ we are here to announce our commitment to human dignity. We are here to announce that human rights are universal. We are here to announce that suffering in war has no dignity. We are here to announce that human beings are born with special rights and respect for these rights is compulsory for every government.”

(Ms. Shirin Ebadi)

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The World Social Forum

the World Social Forum (WSF) is an international forum against neo-liberal policies that provides a space for discussing alternatives, for exchanging experiences and for strengthening alliances between social movements, unions of the working people and NGOs. It developed in response to the growing international movement against neo-liberal economic policies being pursued in most countries and capitalist led globalization. For decades, international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have been making decisions that affect the lives of people all over the world, without being subject to any democratic control. People in Third World countries, as well as the poor and excluded sectors of industrialized countries suffer the devastating effects of economic globalization.

The first WSF was held in January 2001, in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil, timed to coincide with the holding of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland. Every year at the WEF the chief executives of transnational corporations meet with international academic and political leaders in Davos, to chart the global economic agenda. The WSF is a coming together of several concerned organisations and movements, which alarmed at the skewed economic globalisation processes, evolved as a counterweight to the options proposed by the World Economic Forum. The numbers have grown from the first WSF in 2001 where 20,000 people representing over 500 international organisations from more than 100 countries had participated, to the second and the third WSF III, where 55000 participated from 131 countries to 100,000 people in Mumbai. This increase in numbers reflects the growing concern and determination of the anti globalisation critics to counter the globalisation strategies of the Western world.

The World Social Forum is not an organisation, neither is it a united front platform. It is "...an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and inter-linking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neo-liberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism, and are committed to building a planetary society centred on the human person".¹

The WSF does not have a common political manifesto on which all those who participate have to agree. The underlying principle of the World Social Forum is anti-imperialism, anti neo-liberalism, and the conviction that '**another world is possible**'. The basic idea is the creation of a space for everyone to come together with a respect for that space. The WSF process therefore includes diverse viewpoints and strategies, some of which may even seem to be opposing trends. There are those, for example, who say that a reform of the WTO and the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank and IMF) is possible, and there are those who believe that reforming them is impossible and that a more basic and systemic change is necessary. There are those who propose dialogue, and others who believe only in confrontation.

The International Committee of the World Social Forum and the Brazil Organising Committee decided in 2002, that regional, continental, and/or thematic Forums would accompany the annual global WSF meeting across the globe. Regional Social Forums therefore were held in Europe, Africa, and Middle East, Latin America and Asia before WSF III event in 2003.

¹From the WSF Charter of Principles

PAIRVI and the WSF : the Genesis

PAIRVI was started with the objective of strengthening advocacy efforts of local organizations and activists across North India for policy change.² PAIRVI's experiences have centered on enabling organizations to develop campaigns around identified issues, facilitating existing campaigns to reach out towards their spelt objectives, participating in some of these campaigns to express solidarity and also providing skills in developing alliances with identified stakeholders to foster the campaigns. It was during these experiences that PAIRVI developed the human rights approach towards issues as it was realized that some of the core problems of inequality and marginalisation result in the lack of participation of certain sections in the development processes of a democratic society.

Being an organisation with a history of capacity building, partnership development and collaboration with other organisations across North India, PAIRVI perceived that it could play a more effective role if it involved itself in some of the international forums as well. In consonance with this PAIRVI felt that some of the campaigns, which it has been involved in needed to be carried forward through the local, national to the international arena.

- **The Right to Food Campaign**

The human rights approach and call for the rights of all include right to food, livelihood, health, information and education. As a concomitant to the PAIRVI's earlier participation in consultations on drought it was increasingly being felt that the policies of the State are being dictated by the WTO agenda. Despite the surplus availability of food the people in the drought affected areas, did not have access to food or food for work schemes. Several incidence of starvation deaths were being reported from these areas where on the other hand food grains were overflowing from the godowns. To get a deeper insight into this situation and evolve strategies to ensure right to food a National Consultation on Food and Nutrition Security was jointly organized by ICCO, PAIRVI, VANI, Ajit Foundation and CASA in February 2003. During this consultation it became clear that the right to food was being dictated by policies of liberalization, which in turn had International implications as well. The consultation therefore drew up an elaborate action plan including several activities, of which organizing regional consultations formed an important part.

This would build up the momentum for the International Campaign for Food Rights, whose secretariat functions were delegated to PAIRVI. The steering group took up a country paper on food and nutrition security taking into account the regional issues, which the PAIRVI partners at local, and state levels have taken up while campaigning for right to food as a basic human right in India. This experience was represented at the Food Summit +5 in Rome in 2001, and later at the Sustainable Development Summit at Johannesburg. Experiences within these international forums gave the organization an insight on how these forums can assist in making issues visible & bringing about their inclusion in larger collective action.

- **Campaign on Dalit Rights**

During its early phase PAIRVI had been able to gather that discrimination against dalits was very much a human rights issue and there was a need to develop solidarity and collaboration amongst NGOs as well as activists on the same. This agenda became even more urgent when it was decided to participate in the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and other related intolerance (WCAR), where PAIRVI felt it could play a constructive role in advocating for dalit human rights. Keeping in mind that the dalit cause was being espoused by a number of groups and activists, who would be having wide-ranging views and perspectives a National

² PAIRVI-A Profile, Shewli Kumar 2003.

Consultation on Dalit Human Rights was organised by PAIRVI in collaboration with the National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights, in New Delhi on 18th August 2001. The objective was to ensure that all forms of opinion and thinking emerge and a consensus is developed for future strategies. The consultation was attended by the representatives of civil society organizations, academicians, and social activists and facilitated a national debate on the issue of caste discrimination and the interventions needed to eliminate this. It was unanimously agreed that the challenge lies in ensuring and enforcing the governmental affirmative actions and effective implementation of national mechanisms and instruments. At the same time it was emphasized that caste discrimination is not racial discrimination and caste cannot be equated with race. This was reflected in the Delhi Declaration that was as an output from this consultation.

To commemorate the WCAR every year a stocktaking exercise through a National Consultation is done to review the move forward for the dalit cause and newer strategies are discussed. As a part of its commitment for dalit rights PAIRVI partnered several dalit organisations during the Dalit Swadhikar Rally which was organized all over India as a lead up to the WSF IV to be held in Mumbai. PAIRVI actively mobilized dalit groups in Haryana and Punjab, helped plan the route and logistics and participated during the rally.

- **National Campaign on Child Rights (NCCR)**

There are about 60-115 million children in the age group of 5 to 14 years in India who do not have access to education, and have to work to earn their livelihood. Several efforts to address the issue of child rights, and specifically child labor have failed to bring substantial improvement. To give a new impetus to the movement for child rights in India, PAIRVI initiated a campaign on 5th August 2002 with NGO's in twelve states called the National Campaign on Child Rights (NCCR). The NCCR focuses on advocating for amendment in the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, revision and scaling up of NCLP (National Child Labor Project) and setting up of a National Children's Commission.

The major strategies of the Campaign have been interventions with government and policy makers for the eradication of child labor and illiteracy. Towards this end state level meetings and were organized leading to Zonal consultations (covering the four zones, North-Jaipur, South-Chennai, West-Mumbai and East-Kolkata) to agree on recommendations and suggestions on National Children's Commission Bill, 2001 and Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. These recommendations were utilized by the campaign to lobby with the parliamentarians, ministers of state and other policy makers. In preparation for the Asia Social Forum a national solidarity meet of organizations was organized on December 2002 at New Delhi to evoke an interchange of ideas and experiences of the NGOs/activists working in different parts of the country, and a collective analysis developed of common issues

- **UN Experiences and Strengthening of the Rights perspectives**

PAIRVI has been regularly attending the sessions of the UN Human Rights Commission held at Geneva (Switzerland) and making presentations. In doing so PAIRVI links local human rights issues and perspectives with international monitoring mechanisms. Towards this end it prepares and present alternate reports to the UN thematic and treaty bodies. While building alternate views are important, the international solidarity it builds in the process is as important an outcome. These presentations also reinforce the indivisibility of human rights and a collective responsibility of the global community to realize these rights.

PAIRVI's Initiation into the WSF

The campaigns and the collaborative efforts of PAIRVI enabled it to develop partnerships across North India with several grassroots organisations and social activists. The international perspective building through the UN sessions enriched these experiences and enabled it to understand diverse human rights issues within the local and international arenas. Believing that policy change is possible only when strategic interventions are made at local, national and international levels, PAIRVI realized that the Asian Social Forum and the World Social Forum, as well other such international forums could provide these campaigns with the required added impetus.

The Asian Social Forum : a Beginning

The beginnings of an understanding about the World Social Forum began with the participation at the **Asia Social Forum held in Hyderabad, in India from January 2-7, 2003**. The ASF was like the WSF a platform for an open dialogue among the movements, civil society organisations, social activists, labour unions, academicians, advocates and several other concerned individuals who felt the need to understand, discuss and demonstrate solidarity against the capitalist led globalisation process. It was also an exercise in which the specific concerns of the Asian countries were shared, highlighted and discussed.

The forum displayed the participation of a rich diversity of mass organizations, people's movements and citizens' groups. The Asia Social Forum comprised of plenary sessions, seminars, workshops, testimonials and cultural events with the participation of around 10,000 delegates.

At the ASF, PAIRVI organized an event in collaboration with Centre for Dalit Human Rights, Jaipur. The event provided an opportunity to the dalit activists in North India to share their experiences and strategies while working for the dalit cause. The NCDHR members were apprised of the need to understand the liberation struggle of each sub-sect and state with its distinct historical framework that differ from the mono cultures present in south of Vindhya. It was emphasized that the dalit agenda needs to adopt an inclusive approach wherein all people sympathetic to the cause should be involved. It was also felt that the dissension amongst dalits and their sub-castes leads to conflicts for power and thereby harms the dalit cause. It was emphasized that the dalit cause required multiple strategies, which should include mobilizing the first generation dalits achievers as activists for building leadership, and increasing the involvement of women in this process for change. It was pointed out that raising the dalit issue at the international levels alone will not help in changing situations at home instead efforts need to be made to strategize for the proper implementation of the Constitutional provisions, relevant laws, policies and programs for the dalits, within the nation.

Participation at ASF linked PAIRVI to international solidarity efforts and enabled it to develop and strengthen deeper networks among the North Indian organisations and activists. ASF enabled the PAIRVI team to get an exposure to the different streams of thought and ideologies existing within the region as well as appreciate diversity of cultures. It was an opportunity to understand the value and importance of such forums to strengthen local advocacy efforts through national and international partnerships.

Participation at WSF III, at Porto Alegre, Brazil

The ASF experience paved the way for preparing for WSF III in a collective manner as such solidarity for organizations from North India was imperative. VANI and PAIRVI organized a meeting in Delhi on January 3³, 2003, where participants drafted a key statement⁴ to bring out South Asian perspectives during WSF III. During the WSF III, PAIRVI flagged south Asian concerns on drought, food security, and water security that violate human rights in particular of children and dalit communities. PAIRVI along with the Indian delegation attended a workshop on agrarian reforms⁵ where interventions were made on right to food drawing attention to the severe drought in Rajasthan for four consecutive years due to rain failure. The team also joined with other groups from India and organized a workshop on the impact of globalization on dalits, right to work and livelihood.

Mr. P.L. Mimroth and Mr. Narender Kumar were co panelists at a seminar organized by People's Earth Decade, UK. They spoke on exclusion ushered by casteism, and accelerated by globalization. The audience many of whom were introduced to caste exclusion for the first time appreciated this presentation. The team attended meetings organized by ICCO where strategies to promote dalit rights were discussed. The building of cross-region solidarity was a new experience for some in the Indian delegation. The effect of globalization on children with reference to the struggle of child workers in the third world were highlighted by the PAIRVI team to focus on the lost childhood due to ill effects of economic reforms under the WTO.

The learning from north south perspectives and from the perspectives of developing and developed nations was helpful for the Indian delegation. The exposure to the WSF III was an education and training for the Indian team to be able to develop organization skills and gain insight in the cultural diversity within the international arena. This facilitated conceptualizing the process to build a joint coalition for work at the World Social Forum IV in Mumbai in 2004.

Conclusion

PAIRVI's experiences and efforts at collaboration and partnership building has enriched its campaigns, giving them a direction attuned to grassroots reality on the one hand and on the other pushing these agendas at the national and international levels. These efforts meant creating a network of civil society organizations, academicians, lawyers, jurists, policy makers as well as legislators, which would collaborate together on issues. This was the beginning of the Indian Initiative for World Social Forum (IIWSF).

³ For details refer to the record of the meeting "A preparatory meeting for the World Social Forum III" available with PAIRVI.

⁴ Statement by civil society organizations as contribution to WSFIII. Available with PAIRVI on request.

⁵ "Campa Global Par La Reforma Agraria" organized by ICCO and FIAN

India Initiative for World Social Forum IV (IIWSF)

India's initiative of hosting the WSF IV and bringing it closer to other third world nations in the area reaffirmed the country's commitment to further the cause of the poor, marginalized & dispossessed of the world against the tides of capitalist led globalization. WSF-IV opted as its principal focus, opposition to imperialist globalization, patriarchy, and militarism and in order to address issues in India and around the globe. The civil society organizations too perceived a greater role to be played by them in generating a nationwide public opinion regarding the aims & objectives of the Forum. While developing an insight into the effective role the World Social Forum continues to play as an alternative to the WTO agenda as well as the dictates of the developed world, PAIRVI and some of its partners were also developing a common understanding of working together for the WSF IV.

This process for joint efforts on common issues resulted in the evolution of the India Initiative for World Social Forum 2004 (IIWSF). The IIWSF was initiated by PAIRVI, Cecoedcon, Oxfam India, VANI, Neeti Samvad, Centre for Environment Concern, Samerath, Cencord, Centre for Policy Research, and Development Support Team. It consists of a core group of 15 members from different states who entrusted the secretariat responsibilities with PAIRVI to coordinate activities for IIWSF.

The core group members of IIWSF had the experience of engagement with the previous World Social Forums. Having participated in earlier events, and keeping in view the opportunity of having WSF IV in India, the core group members felt that there was a need to reach out to the other parts of the country and involve larger numbers of civil society organizations, social and human rights activists. Therefore, a series of meetings and events were held in five different regions of the country to discuss various issues for the WSFIV. These efforts include local level discussions with farmer bodies, women's organization, human rights groups, national consultation, and participation in the Asian & World Social Forums. The objectives behind these consultations were to inform and mobilize civil society members at state & grass-root levels, for effective participation in the WSF IV as well as to sensitize people on the impact of globalization.

IIWSF Preparatory Processes for WSF IV

The preparatory processes had begun with the consultations and meetings at the regional levels, which enabled the IIWSF to build perspectives for the issues to be jointly addressed at the WSFIV. These consultations enabled the IIWSF to concretize issues, develop strategies, and share information with regional groups and broad base the WSF agendas within a larger national frame.

- **Regional Consultations on WSF IV**

From the experience of Asian Social Forum and World Social Forum PAIRVI realized that the WSF movement needed to reach to a larger number people through civil society organizations, social and human rights activists in India. To this end five regional consultations were organised at Aligarh, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Jamshedpur, and Bhopal to cover a geographical spread of five regions of the country. These consultations took the agenda of WSF to the poor

and marginalized people so that they could be mobilized and included in the local level organizations to participate in WSF.

This attempt converted the WSF 2004 as an inclusive and flexible opportunity that could be designed to build capabilities of local groups and movements through its diverse forms of interaction. These consultations⁶ were seen as a part of the human rights education that PAIRVI facilitates.

a. Regional Consultation, Hyderabad

In early November eight leading civil society institutions of Andhra Pradesh mobilized thirty other organizations and decided a joint action program preceding WSF to educate people on the WSF agenda issues. A joint pamphlet was issued. A second meeting was organized in the first week of December to receive progress reports from the Mumbai Organizing Committee, and from the state organizations on their efforts at mobilization and participation in Mumbai. In the third week of December a meeting of all the groups and organizations was convened which was attended by IWC members Sri Golandaz and Vijay Pratap and Shri Sharad Joshi of Cecoedcon, Rajasthan, representing the NGO-based India Initiative for WSFIV. Over forty people from leading mass organizations in A.P participated in this meeting. The members expressed that WSF is a platform to bring together people from various organizations in a climate of dialogue, discussion and networking within the broad framework of anti-globalization. The Centre for Environment Concern (CEC) was asked to become the nodal point to organize activities for WSF IV from the south. A poster and pamphlet of the IIWSF was shared with the participants. The group resolved to raise at the WSF the effects of the AP Economic Reforms as the first experience of World Bank aided Structural Reforms. Efforts for mobilising public opinion were coordinated. More than 500 delegates participated at WSF IV as a result of the consultation organised in Andhra Pradesh. It was agreed that there would be a convention organised at Hyderabad after the WSF to follow up on the mobilization from the WSF process.

b. Regional Consultation, Aligarh

This Consultation was organized by PAIRVI in partnership with the National Service Scheme (NSS), Aligarh Muslim University, in December. The faculty and students of three different departments invited members of civil society and NGO representatives to deliberate on issues on globalization and human rights, ecology and environment, and impact of globalization on natural resource consumption. They also discussed the gaps in the Indian domestic legal framework, which make the nation vulnerable to the neo-liberal policies of the west. It was reiterated that before being a signatory to agreements such as TRIPS and GATT, the laws in India should have been strengthened. Due to improper safeguard of IPR and weak patent laws India has lost 48% of its traditional knowledge and 127 000 medicinal plants to the US patenting regimen. India should have been well prepared with sufficient laws and sound systems such as a digital library of indigenous knowledge before opening up its markets. The civil society in India can make good use of an event like the WSF IV in retaliating against neo-liberalism and the domination of the world by imperialists.

⁶ Report on each consultation can be requested from PAIRVI.

c. Regional Consultation, Bhopal

This regional consultation was hosted by PAIRVI in collaboration with Niti Samvad, in January and 24 civil society organizations from west and central India attended it. Dr. Onkar Mittal discussed the success of WSF process and encouraged NGOs of Madhya Pradesh to contribute in the process of building sustainable alliances & coalitions against globalisation. Mr. Tapan Bhattacharya gave the background of the social, economic & political dimensions of the state of Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh. He also discussed the “globalisation-friendly” policies being promoted by the state government. Mr. Ravi Manav from Chhattisgarh discussed the merits & demerits of globalization and the impact of globalization at local level. NGO efforts to strengthen the economy at grass roots were also discussed with equal participation of all the members. The session concluded with participants suggesting ways to strengthen local economy by sharing examples of successful initiatives. The delegates who were going to participate in the WSF shared their strategy and organization's role in promotion of local issues at WSF.

d. Regional Consultation, Jamshedpur

To gather further strength for the IIWSF and ensure participation at the WSF another consultation was organized at Jamshedpur. Shramajivi Unnayan, Patamda & VANI, hosted this consultation and 49 participants from different organization took part in the discussions. The discussions focused on the government's role in the globalisation process and most of them felt that it did not have any lucid and clear economic policies. Various multilateral institutions viz. World Bank & International Monetary Fund pressurize the Indian Government for implementation of policies favorable to developed countries. A major concern is that globalisation leads to a more iniquitous distribution of income among & within countries. These in turn aggravate poverty, underdevelopment, marginalisation, social exclusion, cultural homogenization and economic disparities, which may occur along with discrimination within and between communities/state. People's right to justice, to equality of opportunity for all and everyone, to the enjoyment of their human rights, including the right to development, and to equal participation without discrimination in economic, social, cultural, civic and political life should be recognized. The World Social Forum should play a leading role in dissemination of information with the objective of influencing the policy as well as it ensuring the participation of developing countries in global human management.

Concerns were also expresses about the increasing violence and wars, which in turn were affecting economies as well as the development processes within nations. The widespread internal/external conflicts, which are leading to gross violations of human rights, including those arising from war, riots and religious feuds are in fact destroying the democratic processes for inclusive and participatory governance.

e. Rajasthan Social Forum

More than 30 organizations in Rajasthan agreed to lend their names for the declaration emerging from the Rajasthan Social Forum organized by Cecoedecon one of the major partners of PAIRVI in Jaipur. This forum focused on the livelihood issues and the need to streamline the social security benefits of the unorganized sector. It was delineated that issues like child labor and food security can be collectively dealt with when the right to livelihood for adults is ensured and the public services are provided by the State.

- **Alliance with CR4 WSF**

On returning from Brazil after the WSFIII, PAIRVI strengthened its National Campaign for Child Rights and focused on the finalization of the recommendations and suggestions on National Children's Commission Bill, 2001 and Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. A National Consultation was organized on July 2003 at Delhi to consolidate the earlier recommendations and shared with all its partners in zonal consultations in Mumbai, Chennai, Jaipur and Kolkata. All inputs from these Consultations were then given a final shape and a National Consultation was organized with members of Parliament to ensure the inclusion of the recommendations in the Bills to be presented in the Parliament. The event was attended by 12 MPs who expressed solidarity with the demands of NCCR and take on the recommendations when the Bills are tabled in the Parliament.

By this time the child rights campaign initiated by PAIRVI was gaining ground and other organizations and activists too were feeling the need to develop solidarity with each other to lobby more strongly for child rights. Several organizations all over the country initiated the Child Rights 4WSF and PAIRVI became a partner to this process. It was being increasingly felt that children's groups should develop some common concerns and work together on those, as this would enable the creation of policies in consonance with the Convention on Child Rights. It was perceived that the forthcoming WSFIV would provide for an ideal platform for this kind of partnership and at the behest of IACR and other such groups the core group for CR4WSF was formed and agendas laid out for the WSFIV. One such joint action was the participation in the Delhi Social Forum on December 8, 2003.

- **The Delhi Social Forum**

PAIRVI along with other child rights groups urged the WSF committee members in Delhi to include lobbying pre WSF for child rights. The WSF organizers on the other hand encouraged groups to organize independent events to raise issues. PAIRVI in partnership with the CR4WSF members took on the specific responsibility of organizing an event on right to education and inclusion along with other key players. The Delhi Social Forum was a daylong program, with seminars that culminated in a cultural evening.

This forum was the official build up to the Davos Economic Forum where an interface between the international and Indian business communities, the Government of India and international political leaders took place to discuss policies to allow the country and the region to take off economically and socially. In partnership with other organizations a statement was released for the Forum that demanded that the goal of 8% growth for 20 Years should be achieved with investment in child education, health, housing and land rights. PAIRVI also contributed towards the drafting of the lobby paper for the high level inter government **Summit on Education For All** conference in Delhi. This paper was handed over to the ministerial delegations during the working group meeting on November 11, 2003. These activities strengthened the experience of working together with other national networks that impact on sector based work notable among them are NAFRE, India Alliance of Child Rights, Campaign Against Child Labor and Campaign on Global Education.

- **Dalit Swadhikara Rally**

This rally was an occasion for all groups to show solidarity for dalit rights in India that gave a call "Another world must be made". The rally focused to enlighten dalit masses to assert their identity as people against the aggression of casteist and communal forces on dalit's right to life and security as citizens⁷. The rally started simultaneously

⁷ "Swadhikar rally beckons dalits" at Page 3, NCDHR Newsletter, October 2003.

from four different locations at December 6, 2003(Jammu, Delhi, Kolkatta and Kanyakumari) and entered Maharashtra at Dhanu, Ghondia, Chandrapur and Sholapur to culminate at WSF in Mumbai. PAIRVI partnered with NCDHR to organize and participate in the rally and took on organizing role at the Jammu route planning at meetings held in Chandigarh.

PAIRVI played a key role in the Haryana stretch of the route till the rally reached Rajasthan. The advent of national leaders and representation of civil society at locations where dalit violations had occurred lent support to the local activists whose actions were endorsed by democratic secular and progressive forces. The rally participants met with the state administrative machinery and the religious and political leadership to stress that caste based discrimination in Indian society must end. The rally set into motion the process of mass mobilization to build a strong dalit movement from the grass roots. The participation of women and children were an indicator of the popular demands from below for such initiatives.

- **Support to International partners**

In addition to local mobilization PAIRVI took on the role of support for its international partners. Located in the host country of WSF this support becomes a natural extension of hospitality. One such engagement was working along with ICCO a Netherlands based funding and research organization to manage logistics at local level and help organize the workshops.

The ICCO team took this opportunity to undertake field exposure trips to different parts of the country through NGOs and assigned the responsibility of organization and other support to the IIWSF. The ICCO delegation consisted of around 50 people who were further divided into five thematic groups. The themes were peace building and conflict management, drought and natural calamities, gender and food rights, livelihoods under industrialization and impact of urbanization on livelihood. Each thematic group visited different locations near Pune, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Ahemdabad and Mumbai. Each team could invest time in mutual learning, cultural exchange leading to developing stronger solidarity alliance for future work.

The Beginning

These processes were the foundations for partnerships for the WSF IV leading up to the formation of the IIWSF. These were also decisive in enabling PAIRVI to decide upon the issues it would like to highlight at the WSF as well as develop further insight and solidarity with similar civil society organizations and other stakeholders at the national, regional and international levels. During these processes, the PAIRVI team emerged stronger, and they learnt to handle divergent views and ideologies as well as it was a training into handling different tenors and ideas in an atmosphere of tolerance and creativity.

Pairvi's Involvement in WSF IV

PAIRVI's experiences at the ASF as well as the WSF III had laid out the foundation for the agendas to be adopted at the WSF IV. With the inception of the IIWSF it became important to share these with the IIWSF members, discuss the issues, devise strategies and come to a consensus for the events to be undertaken at the WSF IV. Hence one of the foremost activities that were given primacy was dissemination of information and sharing of views. PAIRVI's role revolved around developing concept notes for some of the decided events, delegation of responsibilities to different resource persons within the IIWSF, as well as maintaining a consistent system of dialogue and sharing of the latest updates and work done.

Information Generation and Sharing

Updates on the WSF process were provided by the IIWSF secretariat so as to ensure quick decision-making and moving forward with finalization of programs and agendas. To make this process more effective a web site⁸ was launched and email communication was established. Since majority of the partners and their audience understands only the vernacular, efforts at snail mail posting ensured that discrimination in information dissemination does not hamper the mobilization efforts. PAIRVI devised innovative methods for this, which included compiling of resource folders, documentation of campaigns, conducting independent studies, keeping records of updated information on political developments and dissemination of the same to partners. Efforts were also made to enable the partner organizations to document and develop case stories of their campaigns and at the same time develop and disseminate relevant information through the PAIRVI partner network. This documentation facilitated information sharing during state level consultations and national and international campaigns on dalit rights, children's rights and food security.

During the WSF IV, PAIRVI had booked a stall to disseminate information about its events at the venue, develop contacts and explore further partnerships and also advocate for the campaigns it has been actively involved in. Thematic information brochures on IIWSF events were published in advance. A CD (Ensuring Food Security in a Globalized Market) on food security and sovereignty was developed for dissemination during the WSF. Mr. Pim Verhallen (Holland) released the CD, on the 20th of January during the event organized by IIWSF on Ensuring Food Security in a Globalized market. The CD can be utilized for advocacy on right to food to assist governments to fulfill their Millennium Development Goals commitment to reduce the number of world's hungry by 2015.

Events Organised by IIWSF during WSF IV

India Initiative for WSF IV organized a series of seminars at the WSF IV held at Mumbai during 16-21 January 2004. The five focal themes of the events were:

- Rights with Dignity Revisiting Principles and Practices of Affirmative Action
- Accountability and Transparency in Multilateral Institutions
- New Priorities in Human Rights- Terrorism

⁸ www.NGOS4WSF4

- Ensuring Food Sovereignty in a Globalized Market
- Child Rights Accountability of State and Multilateral Institutions

A brief overview of the events is provided below. Minutes of each event and theme papers are available with PAIRVI on request.

1. Rights with Dignity Revisiting Principles and Practices of Affirmative Action

“All human beings are born equal in dignity and rights,” states the Universal Declaration on Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly 1948. It has enjoined upon all the signatory States to ensure that all persons enjoy their rights without any discrimination based on race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. In contrast however all societies have differences as all human beings are inherently different. Differences of wealth, status, interests, talents and opinion exist in every society, and therefore there is also the unequal amongst the equal.

The affirmative action or positive discrimination was introduced to compensate for the unequal initial advantages enjoyed by the dominant groups. Affirmative action is a catchall phrase referring to laws, customs, and social policies intended to alleviate the types of discrimination that limit opportunities for certain individuals in groups in the social structure of certain societies. More specifically, it refers to both voluntary and mandatory efforts undertaken by federal, state, and local governments, private employers, and schools to combat discrimination and to promote equal opportunity in education and employment for all. PAIRVI's experiences on human rights advocacy revealed the need to debate on affirmative actions within India as well as around the world and the WSF was the ideal platform for such an event. The major purpose of this event was to understand the changing perspectives of affirmative actions, their role in removing discrimination and what kind of future strategies can be perceived in the context of the increasing globalisation processes.

Mr. Sharad Joshi (Secretary, Cecoedecon) who defined the context of the meeting initiated the seminar and Mr. Anil Singh (Secretary, VANI) talking on the objectives of Affirmative Action also urged for the need to look at the issue in a broader perspective. He delineated certain key issues, which needed to be addressed while examining the affirmative action programs. These were:

- ◆ Whether the benefits have reached to the needy sections of the society.
- ◆ The affirmative actions in the private sector.
- ◆ Involvement of all sections of the society.
- ◆ Evaluation of the present and planning for the future.

Prof. R.R. Singh the Director of Tata Institute of Social Sciences delved on the “Rationale and the Concept of Affirmative Action”. He feels that WSF in discussing globalization should deal both in the positive and negative sides. He had examined the constitution of three largest democracies, USA, India and South Africa and felt the essence of “We the people” as underlying principle and that sovereignty lies with the people. But the Constitution of USA does not have the term social justice, in South Africa social justice occurs; in India we call it Social, Economic and Political equality. He defined Affirmative Action as “actions taken for the special class keeping in mind their particular needs”.

The various new dimensions of Affirmative Action are, social, environmental, economic and political. He believes that the arena of Affirmative Action, which was confined to ST/SC and OBC in India, needs an expansion to include the new

groups. But at the same time fears that by the move of expansion the earlier targets might get blurred. He went on to expand the purview of the affirmative actions emphasizing that today they are not only confined to local boundaries but have spread to inter country, regional and international arenas like the UN and other regulatory bodies.

He highlighted that social justice is an important component of social justice and hence all affirmative action programs need to keep social justice as a central theme. Giving an instance of regional level initiatives on affirmative action he related the Social Justice Budget Policy of the Government of Maharashtra, which is the first state in world to perpetrate social justice indicators. It has prepared the 2004-05 social justice budget of the state with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in which 28 departments and ministries of the government will pay special attention to social justice indicators.

Mr. Pim Verhallen from ICCO shared his European experiences on Affirmative Action. He said that each society defines its own way of dealing with discrimination and inequality. In Europe there is no such affirmative action practiced but it practices equality as its right. He gave the instance of differences between Catholics and Protestants and its resolution by giving all people equal treatment before law. He felt that affirmative action should be more remedial than preferential and that the State should try to avoid inherent inequality of opportunity. He also urged the civil society not to depend on the government for everything, as it is not feasible. It would be best is to share responsibilities and work alongside the government to create a total consensus on affirmative action. The effort should be to try to empower those groups in such a way that they do not have to depend on affirmative programs.

The situation of the north and south may differ as enumerated in Mr. Tony Kelly's presentation of the Australian aboriginals. The USA and European states provide equality, as they do not recognize historical discrimination, where as countries that have been through struggle against colonization like India and Australia need affirmative action to realize equality. Mr. Kelly felt that rights are not granted but are realized after a struggle. Mr. Tony Kelly sharing the Australian experience gave instances of the Aboriginal Struggle and said that the components of a struggle are recognition, rights, responsibilities & reconciliation. He also highlighted that the stage of reconciliation of two divergent cultures is the most difficult and creates considerable conflict and tension.

Mr. P.L. Mimroth, Centre for Dalit Human Rights reiterated the need for affirmative action in India and explained that the Indian scenario is different from the European and Australian situation as the Indian society is based on perpetuation of a social order, the caste system. He related the situation of the dalits in India and their status, the lack of outreach of the affirmative actions as well as the failure of the legal machinery in redressing the grievances of the dalits. He felt that there was a need to review the systemic failures in ensuring affirmative actions for the dalits in the country.

This seminar promoted new dimensions of affirmative actions on the one hand and acknowledged that the present programs need to be reviewed and reformed with a more realistic approach especially in the context of globalization.

2. Accountability and Transparency in Multilateral Institutions

This seminar intended to delineate strategies to ensure the accountability of the multilateral Institutions like the World Bank and IMF and the Transnational Corporations, which are perpetuating economic imperialism. It is being understood that these institutions are not multilateral in the real sense, the membership to these institutions being limited by considerations of power. This imbalance of power came to be evident even within the institutions themselves. The discussions and decision-making on economic and trade issues increasingly moving away from the UN to the Bretton

Woods institutions or to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) where negotiations are made unequal by structure and in principle there is no democracy in decision-making. In practice, the IMF became an instrument for collecting debt from the third World and restructuring their economies according to a particular ideology. And the World Bank's decisions on loans are based on whether the applicant's policies or ideology are approved by those with power. With the formation of the World Trade Organisation there has been a further erosion national sovereignty, as the WTO has both the legislative and judicial authority to challenge laws, policies and programmes of member nations if they don't conform to the WTO rules and it has the power to strike down these national rules if they can be shown to be 'trade restrictive'.

The seminar was initiated by the chair Mr. Atul Kumar Anjan (Secretary Communist Party of India-M) who went on to reiterate that these international agencies should be accountable and transparent in their policies of economic reform. He added that a series of reforms are needed within these Institutions for this kind of transparency, which would then ensure that there is equal participation of the Third World countries for global decision making processes. The panelists included Dr Arun Kumar who spoke on the role of World Bank and the IMF, Prof. Muchkund Dubey who highlighted the power imbalances within the UN system and suggested ways to strengthen the role of UN institutions and Dr. Onkar Mittal who focused on the negative role of Trans National Corporations. The discussions examined alternatives to further democratize UN through people's assembly. Some suggestions included establishment of a global tax authority, expansion of G20 to include regional group of countries and creation of an economic security council. The clarifications and questions from the audience reaffirmed that the developing countries need to assert themselves and work towards strengthening the UN systems to counter the negative roles of these institutions.

3. New Priorities in Human Rights - in particular Terrorism

PAIRVI has been increasingly concerned with the phenomenon of terrorism, and felt that there is an intrinsic link between the globalization forces and the development of this phenomenon. In fact, the forces of violence, and antagonism, are increasingly threatening the global world and there seems to be an obsession for indulging in violent acts against humanity. It is to be remembered in retrospect that violence has always begot violence and revenge and retribution has had a spiraling action in further tightening this noose of violence. Terrorism in its manifest form today has become a major threat to world peace and is malignantly destroying the ethos and spirit of mutual and peaceful coexistence, and most of all violates the fundamental right to life. The term terrorism has defied description but there is even consensus on the fact that violent acts perpetrated against innocent civilians, women and children in the form of killings and massacre, cannot and will not be considered an excuse for any cause however noble it may be propagated to be. It has to be condemned in all vehemence and universally by humans across nations, communities and societies. According to the Supreme Court of India "...it is not possible to give a precise definition of terrorism or to lay down what constitutes terrorism. But ... it may be possible to describe it as use of violence when its most important result is not merely the physical and mental damage of the victim but the prolonged psychological effect it produces or has the potential of producing on the society as a whole." The Vienna Declaration and Program of Action adopted by 1993 World Conference on Human rights has said "all acts, methods and practices of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations are activities aimed at the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy".

As has been suggested by some the causes of terrorism can be put down to the crisis of national identity, authoritarianism and lack of democracy, erosion of values of tolerance, pluralism and diversity and unequal sharing of benefits of development. Indeed there is a greater need to not just condemn terrorist acts anywhere and everywhere but

also to develop an insight into the possible strategies to create environments that are antagonistic to the growth of terrorism. Therefore any counter terrorism strategy will have to develop on the grounds of psychological as well as physical; diplomatic as well as military; economic as well as persuasion. In this respect therefore the people as well as the governments have to be realistic with what can be achieved in the given circumstances and what cant be achieved a dilemma which is inherent in all open democracies. It was in this context that this seminar on terrorism was designed. The seminar was introduced by Ms. Shewli Kumar (PAIRVI) terrorism was becoming an increasing threat to peaceful coexistence. Violence needed to be condemned in any form and could not be used as an excuse for any cause. Even the state needed to ensure that counter terrorism measures did not violate the human rights of individuals.

Justice Dave, chaired the panel discussion and opened it by remarking that the term terrorism has defied description but there is even consensus on the fact that violent acts perpetrated against innocent civilians, women and children in the form of killings and massacre, cannot and will not be considered an excuse for any cause however noble it may be propagated to be. It has to be condemned in all vehemence and universally by humans across nations, communities and societies. According to the Supreme Court of India "...it is not possible to give a precise definition of terrorism or to lay down what constitutes terrorism. But ... it may be possible to describe it as use of violence when its most important result is not merely the physical and mental damage of the victim but the prolonged psychological effect it produces or has the potential of producing on the society as a whole." The Vienna Declaration and Program of Action adopted by 1993 World Conference on Human rights has said " all acts, methods and practices of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations are activities aimed at the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy". What is a matter of concern and needs to be publicly debated and discussed are the feelings of sectarianism and separatism which terrorism fosters by stereotyping the symbols of religions, cultures and values as promoters of violence. No faith or culture propagates or promotes violence; because the underlying principle in all is that of, love empathy and peaceful coexistence.

This was followed by a panel discussion and the panel included Mr. SC Jain, Prof. Tony Kelly (Australia), Mr. Lennard Roubos (Holland), and Ms. Gurinder Kaur (OXFAM, India). The key issues that emerged from the discussion were on the origin, implication and elimination of terrorism. Terrorism occurs when the social fabric of a country grows weak to assimilate all the sections of the society, people loose contact with one another and feel threatened and fall prey to cycles of violence manifested due to poverty and oppression. This cycle can break only if social contacts are strengthened though communication.

Terrorism has imposed new challenges before the government as well as the society. It blocks development and is a handicap for the human rights activists and workers. There is a need to revive principles of peaceful coexistence by focusing on tolerance and inculcating a sense of duty towards the country in the future generation to bestow peace.

4. Right to Food in a Globalized Economy

PAIRVI has been extensively involved in the right to food campaign and the WSF was an ideal forum to discuss its experiences with partner of the IIWSF. Food security is a prerequisite for maintaining harmony and order in the society. Availability of food on sustainable basis at the global, national and regional household and individual level is a corner stone of nutrition well being. Food security essentially means that all people at all times have access to safe & nutritious food to maintain a healthy & active life.

The human right to adequate food, as enshrined in the Article 11 of the International Convention of Economic, Social & Cultural rights (ICESCR) entails the obligation of state parties to enact legislation in order to progressively realize the substantive right. The World Food Summit convened in 1996 adopted a plan of action for reducing the number of world's hungry population to half their number by 2015. This plan of action contained seven commitments that were to act as guiding principles for the national & international policy makers and it also spelt out objective & actions for the implementation of these commitments.

This seminar intended to link up national campaigns on food rights with efforts by international civil society to generate a strong commitment to the right to food. The objective was to develop and set the stage for long term lobbying efforts towards the adoption of framework laws in various countries. This would could be then utilized for campaigning for social justice from many angles-such as pressing for effective agrarian reform, agreement under the WTO or backing to basic income grant initiatives.

This seminar was initiated by Mr. K.S. Gopal (Center for Environment Concern), who went on to give a brief outline of the topic, and introduced the speakers. He was of the opinion that the food is one of the basic necessities of the human being and the right to food should be secured, efforts should be made both at local and global level. He then invited the panelists to share their views and the panel included Ms. Ger (ICCO-APRODEV), Mr. Pim Verhallen (Holland), Mr. P. M. Paul (Cecoedecon), Ms. Faiza Abbasi (AMU), Mr. Atul K Anjan, Ms. Savita Sharma, Mr. Devendra Sharma, Mr. Zekh (France), Mr. Jase (Phillipinnes).

Ms Ger gave brief outline on food security with emphasis on integrated approach of development. She said food is one of the primary need of human being, and as a member of civil society, we should also ensure the affordability and accessibility of food to the every citizen. The right to food is indivisible and government should emphasis on implementation of this right. The issue concerned needs integrated development of all components at all levels, and the solution does not lie in isolation, so emphasis should be given on development of various components viz. Food, Water and Environment.

Speaking on the local and global perspective of food security Ms. Faiza Abbasi (Aligarh Muslim University), discussed the World Food Submit of 1996 and other efforts on food security at national & international level. She went on to indict the government's failure to revitalize the public distribution system a mechanism, which ensures food to the poor and in fact despite availability of food the lack of proper distribution, has led to food insecurity. She believes that India has a rich tradition of self-sufficient villages, and emphasis should be given on strengthening these traditional systems, in order to achieve food security, together with overall development of the society.

Dr. Devendra Sharma shared the international perspectives on Food Security and initiated his discussion by enlightening the participants on the strategies of capitalist countries based on MMM approach, i.e. Missionary, Military, and Money. He viewed the developed countries cynically and explained that they initiated their work with charity-based work of missionaries and used alternative approaches if missionary activity failed, i.e. providing funds through donor agencies.

He was equally of the view that although the right of food has been accepted as a basic human right under the UN system; the mechanism to ensure the right goes beyond the purview of UN. In most developing countries, agriculture including crops and animal husbandry, fisheries, forestry and agro processing, constitutes the backbone of the livelihood & ecological security system. Transitional Corporations (TNCs) are dictating food production and distribution, which has further marginalised farmer and peasants' role in agriculture. This has resulted in the destruction of their traditional knowledge & skills, thereby their livelihoods. The industrialization and globalization of food imperils the natural world. TNCs and developed countries have attempted to patent all life forms, farmers', seeds and medicine for public health. Patents are the precursors for commodification and private ownership of genetic/biological resources and traditional knowledge and processes. International institutions and treaties have accelerated the process of agriculture, industrialization & globalization, while valuing the rights of corporations over those of people. Result of this will be drastically decreased in food production and the food market will be completely out of the control of ordinary people. It will increase the debt burden of poor countries this further aggravating food insecurity.

Ms. Zekh from France expressed that in this globalised economy the farmer needs to produce more crops, so that they will be able to compete in the market economy. Although national & international agencies are directly affected the local economy, as these MNCs which are directly working at the local levels & are effectively destroying the local economy. The price of food grains now depends upon the market economy rather than on the demand and supply factor.

Mr. Atul Anjan hit out at the dual policies of United Nations, regarding food grains & crops. He said the UN is trying to universalize the laws & regulations on food grains, but the geographical structure of various countries promote localized needs of the particular region which need to be addressed more appropriately, rather trying to run the whole world on the basis of same needs & policies. Policies should address the specific demands of each country and region.

During the discussions the negative role of the Transitional Corporations (TNCs) taking over food production and distribution was discussed in great detail and it was emphasized that this has further marginalized the farmer's role in agriculture by making their indigenous knowledge & skills redundant through market pressure. The industrialization and globalization of food imperils the natural world. TNCs and developed countries have attempted to patent all life forms, farmers', seeds and medicine for public health. Patents are the precursor for private ownership of genetic/biological resources and traditional knowledge and processes. It will increase the debt burden of poor countries further aggravating food insecurity.

The participants in the seminar felt that it is necessary to strengthen local bodies' in-order to ensure food security by preserving traditional sustainable systems of food production. If the country situated in the location where conditions are not favorable to food grains, then import of food grains can be used as a supplement to fill in demands of food security after ensuring food sovereignty of its people.

5. Child Rights: Accountability of State and Multilateral Institutions

A child's world is made up of creative expression, learning and contribution. Yet their needs and views often get overlooked. All States have a fundamental duty to ensure that their children receive and grow in an environment of creativity, peace, security and freedom from any form of overt or covert exploitation. The Convention on the Rights of

the Child is a global document, which mandates the welfare of the child with the child's perspective as the central theme. Participation of the child in programs for development, education, welfare and health is the integral component laid out by the Convention. Similarly the International Labor Organization with its focus on workers rights has committed itself to explore and develop mechanisms against child labour and several conventions dealing with labour, focus on child rights as a central theme. With the increasing tendency of States succumbing to the forces of fundamentalism, as well as globalization, the children are being increasingly marginalized across all classes though their experiences may be different. They are becoming victims of consumerism, sexual abuse, lack of space and creativity, strife and communalism, insecurity, hunger and malnutrition and many more such maladies.

PAIRVI's initiative to ensure child rights through its National Campaign on Child Rights was a logical corollary to this seminar on Child Rights. With a view towards ensuring child rights in the context of the diversity of country specific needs this event proposed:

- To understand the mechanisms of accountability adopted by multilateral institutions while planning out programs within the countries for child rights,
- To develop transparency in these systems for formulation and implementation of programs for child rights.
- To get an insight into the experiences of NGOs in implementation of programs on child rights through experience sharing.
- To evolve strategies to ensure child rights through international, national and local institutions.

Initiating the seminar, Mr. Narender Kumar (PAIRVI) elaborated on the objectives of the seminar specifying the need to evolve strategies to ensure child rights through international, national and local institutions to hold them accountable to their obligations under international law.

The panelists Ms Savita Naqvi (UNICEF, India), Ms. Kate Kroeger (USA), Ms Shivani Bhardwaj (IACR), Ms Neema Pant (Cecoedecon) and Ms Aparna Sahay highlighted that accountability processes on child rights have been activated in India and the world through international mechanisms and guarantees like the constitution. Yet the violations and gaps in realization of these rights need to be monitored. Organizations like UNICEF use the strategy of encouraging the state to fulfill its obligations but even in performing this role they are deficient in raising resources to completely fulfill this task. Children's organizations have monitored gaps and have tried to build accountability through networks. The children's organizations need to demand participation in local governance and assert for the rights of the child. Partnership with adult rights based movement could be an effective strategy to realize the right to participation while continuing to document and monitor the gaps in fulfilling child rights.

Upholding child rights at the WSF with CR4WSF

During the WSF IV children's rights issues took the center stage. This was possible with efforts of 58 children's organizations and networks coming together to decide on impacting the WSF agenda. PAIRVI was an active partner in this process. Eight workshops were planned jointly by different organizations. These included workshops on issues like children in conflict with the law, disability, children's rights, children facing homelessness, trafficking, etc. The core objective of CR4WSF was to effectively profile child rights as a priority concern on the WSF agenda, and the related aim to communicate the child rights issues in a way that would both inform and influence.

The biggest achievement of the CR4WSF was to be able to influence the India Organizing Committee to hold a panel event during the WSF IV with the central theme 'Children's Rights in a Globalising World - Making the World fit for all children. Who is accountable? Who is responsible?' At the Panel discussion 10 children testified the violations of their rights and narrated how they have organised themselves to strengthen their movement towards betterment of their lives. Among the panelist were Ms Asma Jehangir, UN Rapporteur Against Extra Judicial Detentions and Mr Miloon Kothari, UN Rapporteur on Adequate Housing. The panelist offered stories of hope and encouragement to the child participants who had come prepared with poignant presentations. Ms Miranda, from the content commission of WSF international secretariat was visibly moved by the event and by the fact that 58 groups that had come together under the umbrella network, Child Rights for World Social Forum (CR4WSF). Ms Miranda later invited the group to send a request to place a representative on child rights at the WSF content commission for planning events for WSF V.

Child labor groups and unorganized sector workers were linked by CR4WSF during the preparatory phase of WSF to plan a joint event on child labor in context of SAARC. The discussion pointed out that child labor cannot be abolished if adult workers do not have social security. Mr. Davos from the National Movement of Domestic workers stressed that children in domestic work will continue unless domestic workers themselves are empowered to rehabilitate child workers with the help from the movement and the administration. This issue was discussed at events that preceded the child labor event and activists working with adult workers struggles were encouraged to participate both in child labor and child trafficking events. This was done to achieve solidarity and for converging agendas for future.

The CR4WSF event organized by CACT helped groups understand issues around trafficking. Awareness about trafficking has not led to decline in the numbers of children trafficked. The globalized economy is putting greater pressure on the poor to sell their children. Not many cases get registered and those children who are traced and saved again get into the cycle of violations. Since, it is understood that prevention of trafficking will be the better way to address this issue, the campaign and its supporters should try out strategies to link with those movements who work on livelihood security, land rights and workers rights

The child right events during WSF made a positive impact and children defined ways to include their rights to make another world possible. Over 2500 children from all over the world were at the WSF to discuss the impact of globalization and liberalization on children. Activists made sure that children were present at workshops as active participants to express opinions and ask questions from the panelists during different events organised by WSF and other organizations and networks. The forum had declared January 20 as the Child Rights Day and had arranged for three separate stage spaces for the children to put up their cultural expressions and concerns. Children also participated in the 14 seminars, solidarity events and marches organized by the CR4WSF members. Besides planned activities by CR4WSF many other independent organization talked about child labor and trafficking. The speakers spoke of the impact of globalization on the children both in terms of personal as well as political concerns for the future generations.

At the feedback meeting of the CR4WSF members on the 21st January members' felt that the purpose of including child rights in the agenda of World Social Forum was achieved. However it was also emphasised that this group should continue to impact on the child rights agenda nationally as well as globally by planning ahead for WSF V that will be held in Port Alegre in Brazil in 2005.

The Road Ahead

The main objective of PAIRVI is to promote Human Rights in northern & central Indian states through building opportunities and capacity of partners to be the facilitators of that process. PAIRVI as the secretariat of IIWSF provided support to developing the thematic structure of the IIWSF. This enabled sharing of ideas and knowing of successful practices, through intra state dialogue. Coordination of the IIWSF provided a platform for linking the members with other networks and international NGOs. The road ahead can meander through the following program objectives:

Network, coalition and alliance building, development and maintenance

- Clarify and strengthen IIWSF memberships
- Identify local, state level and national partners as reference points for other partners to tap specialized skills and expertise needed.
- Induct members for IIWSF

A strategic-planning workshop for PAIRVI partners will develop member relationships while ensuring that the program becomes more responsive to its constituents. Member services and member development go hand in hand to encourage NGOs in north India to use the UN instruments and mechanism in protection of Human Rights, to create joint link between local and state level NGOs, social movements and global civil society.

PAIRVI will also constructively contribute to IIWSF's reconstruction. Building relationships with other networks and movements are strategic. This may not require mutual membership but will be sought on mutual benefit in pursuit of a common objective, usually involving advocacy. In 200406, it is expected that these alliances will grow and multiply, due to the complementary objectives of the WSF movement.

In PAIRVI, documentation, research and analysis facilitation will help in producing national-scale reports, assessing human rights and ESC rights status in north India. During the next two years PAIRVI will encourage members to interact with social movements around the world advocating against World Bank, IMF and WTO conditionality that derogate ESC rights. By facilitating such exchange of information and personal interaction, PAIRVI constitutes a learning institution that contributes to the development of social movements. One focus of these efforts is to support conditions that enable the holding of a north India Social Forum before the next WSF.

PAIRVI-IIWSF will continue to build solidarity among the dalits, the children and the right to food campaigners in the PAIRVI Network. The PAIRVI Network will benefit from international events like the WSF to make its cause known and induct new partners.

The PAIRVI Network Program for the 2004-06 periods could possibly involve the following:

- Participation in annual events at the World Social Forums IV, V and VI
- Intercommunity workshops for understanding human rights and
- Working with the communities to ensure fulfillment of the tasks and commitments previously committed.

PAIRVI will play a role in supporting conditions for an Asia Social Forum II to emerge as an occasion to foster social movements in the country, as well as promote cooperation in local social forums. The main objective for participating in related activities is to increase member cooperation and participation in cross-sectoral efforts to build “human rights agenda” locally and enable a better-informed discourse on globalization issues and alternatives. Towards this end it will interact with the International Organizing Committee of the WSF

Empowerment and capacity building to ensure ESC rights

- Create and disseminate knowledge through people's processes for a critical and effective application of the Right to Food
- Develop Right to Food monitoring indicators through those social processes such that PAIRVI members and others can apply at all levels
- Build practical skills for HR defense via training, development of training materials and methods
- Conduct fact-finding missions according to established PAIRVI criteria.
- Conduct exchanges on Right to Food (knowledge and strategies) across the network.

India still lacks a well-developed and locally articulated ESC rights culture. Therefore, PAIRVI will take initiative to produce in various forms the lessons of ESC rights work in north India. The development of ESC rights culture in north India urgently requires the development and dissemination of indigenous articulation of ESC rights including food rights content in context of children's on. Thus, Objective I and II are designed so that their outcomes will also contribute to advocacy and political transformation at various levels. Each level has specific objectives, desired outcomes and tasks.

PAIRVI will take initiative to produce in various forms the lessons of ESC rights work in north India. The development of ESC rights culture in north India urgently requires the development and dissemination of indigenous articulation of ESC rights including food rights content in context of children's women's and dalit rights. State obligations and implementation gaps articulated on the basis of violations and solutions in their local context need to be recorded. PAIRVI will use this research as a base for training courses on defense of ESC rights and presenting parallel reports. These tools for monitoring human rights will facilitate members' development of indicators through local adaptation so that they make sense in their local context.

Build skills for defense through development of training materials and methods

So as to help PAIRVI members and partners to build their capacity to monitor and defend human rights, PAIRVI will develop methods informed by experience gathered from the network. PAIRVI intends producing materials for training in response to the expressed needs and strategic opportunities to build the coalition to develop economic, social and cultural rights culture.

In 2004-06, PAIRVI will publish and distribute a trainer guide in Hindi and English with the corresponding materials for regional and local audiences, in order to optimize the dissemination of knowledge and human rights-defense capacities.

PAIRVI will deliver training on human rights. This service is related to PAIRVI's role to encourage and prepare NGO members in north India to use the international instruments, in addition to domestic law, for the protection of human rights and access the local, state level, national and the UN human rights.

Advocacy for Human Rights

The human rights framework arguments, monitoring tools, methodologies and materials will be developed and used to ensure that PAIRVI approach become standard in forums where IIWSF-PAIRVI members engage with governments and state power to influence decisions. The training, information and strategy exchanges will assist the members to ensure more-effective self-representation. Thus, Objective I and II are designed so that their outcomes will also contribute to advocacy and political transformation at various levels. Each level has specific objectives, desired outcomes and tasks. PAIRVI and its members will continue to intervene in the UN treaty monitoring bodies such as the Commission on Human Rights and other international decision-making bodies in order to develop soft-law standards that advance the specificity of the human right to food in general, as well as specific application of human rights for vulnerable groups

About Pairvi

PAIRVI grew out of a strong belief that functioning of the democracy in a civil society is based on minimizing the gap between the aspirations of the people and public policies. It requires an unambiguous and constant interaction between the state and people through a multitude of fora and media. Civil Society Organizations have a key role in facilitating this dialogue. Public Advocacy Initiatives for Rights and Values in India (PAIRVI) was formed in 1998 to facilitate and strengthen the advocacy efforts of the grassroots Voluntary Organizations in Northern India and provide them a national platform for voicing their issues as well as to enable them with requisite expertise for their advocacy efforts.

Ever since its inception, Pairvi has been making conscious efforts for addressing advocacy issues of partner agencies as well as functioning as a resource center for them. It has taken upon itself multiple responsibilities including building advocacy capacities of the grass roots organizations, facilitating social change through initiation of campaigns on people's issues, providing specific inputs on awareness raising and facilitating dialogue between the various actors of the civil society such as social activists, academics, jurists, journalists, bureaucrats, policy makers etc. Pairvi has been undeterred in its commitment towards the concerns of the marginalized, democratic and human rights, livelihood issues, and accountable, transparent and interactive governance.

PAIRVI has crossed ways with a number of milestones on its mission. Through an array of activities from initiating and providing effective support to the issue based advocacy campaigns led by its partner organizations across eight states of Northern India, to organizing informative and value added training and capacity building programmes, to developing networks and linkages among organizations working with similar concern, it has drawn its strength from the weak and the wordless, the discriminated and the downtrodden and hopes to continue to do so.

VISION

To foster a growth oriented, just and equitable society based on the respect for the rights of the individuals and non-discrimination among the caste, communities and gender by enabling the underprivileged and uninitiated secure their rights.

MISSION

To enhance advocacy competence of grassroots organization working in North India, so that they can advocate more effectively in favor of the marginalized particularly on the issues related to caste, class, gender, environment and democratic human rights.

OBJECTIVES

- ♦ To initiate dialogues between the organizations, social activists, journalists, lawyers, bureaucrats, legislature and the judiciary to promote equitable public policy and non-partisan implementation of laws.
- ♦ To strengthen advocacy efforts in India by undertaking research and collection of data on issues of social relevance including information/ data about the judiciary, the legislature, the bureaucracy, the media, and the grassroots

organizations involved in advocacy efforts with the objective of influencing policy and foster positive action by the authorities.

- ♦ To collect and disseminate information and knowledge about social problems, social services, welfare policies and programmes through lectures, symposia, documentation and publication of books, monographs and journals.
- ♦ To organize seminars, debates, discussions and meetings on issues relating to social awareness with a view to promoting knowledge, understanding, awareness and analysis of such issues and dissemination of the results of the research undertaken.



